

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for making a modular casket assembly, comprising the steps of:
  - a. mixing a composite base material with a binder;
  - b. compressing the mixture into a plurality of molded panels defining a casket box;
  - c. applying a veneer to the outer surfaces of the panels;
  - d. assembling the panels into a casket box.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the binder is a hot melt glue.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein the base material is wood particles.
4. The method of claim 3, wherein the base material is hardwood particles.
5. The method of claim 3, further including the step of grinding the wood particles into a fine sawdust.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the veneer is a thin wood veneer.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the veneer is a hardwood.
8. The method of claim 1, wherein the veneer is a soft material.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the veneer is cloth.
10. The method of claim 8, wherein the veneer is leather.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein the veneer is a metal foil.
12. A casket assembly made of pre-cut panels, the assembly comprising:
  - a. a pair of substantially flat end panels;
  - b. a pair of substantially flat side panels each adapted to mate with the pair of end panels;
  - c. a bottom panel adapted to mate with the side panels and the end panels to define with the side panels and end panels an open box;
  - d. a lid panel adapted to cover the open box.
13. The casket assembly of claim 1, wherein the lid panel is hinged to one of said side panels along one edge.
14. The casket assembly of claim 12, including decorative brackets for securing the side, end and bottom panels in assembled relationship.
15. The casket assembly of claim 1, wherein each panel comprises a composite material having:

- a. a core layer comprising bonded wood particles;
- b. a decorative outer veneer; and
- c. an inner veneer.

16. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer comprises a thin wood veneer.

17. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer is a hardwood.

18. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer is a soft material.

19. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer is cloth.

20. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer is leather.

21. The casket assembly of claim 15, wherein the decorative outer veneer is a metal foil.